

have sent the country's economy into a tailspin. But in typical Russian fashion, they planned for some of these sanctions, and they have found loopholes in the current sanction regime. It has taken a page out of Venezuela's book by using the purchase and sale of gold to bring in cash with which to run their economy. The Russian Federation is buying gold to offset the devaluation of the ruble, its currency, and then selling that gold in international markets in exchange for high-value currency.

In short, Russia is laundering money through the gold market, and we need to put a stop to it. I, along with other colleagues, introduced the Stop Russian GOLD Act that would bring an end to this practice. We talked to Secretary Yellen, and she agreed that this would be supplemental to what the administration has already done unilaterally.

This legislation would apply sanctions to parties who help Russia finance their war by buying or selling this blood gold. That means anyone who buys or transports gold from Russia's central bank would be the target of sanctions. This would be a huge deterrent to anyone considering doing business with Russia and helping them evade sanctions. In short, we need to take every possible step to cut the financing for Putin's war machine, and this is one additional way to do so. Along with the lend-lease bill I mentioned a moment ago, I hope we can pass this legislation without further delay.

There is more we can do to support Ukraine and hit Russia where it hurts and to raise the costs associated with its unprovoked and unwarranted invasion of Ukraine, but it is past time to continue to ramp up the pressure to the maximum ability that we can.

At this juncture, principled leadership and decisive action are absolutely critical. As Leader MCCONNELL put it, President Biden has generally done the right thing, but never soon enough. For example, last year, the President ignored the immense pressure to sanction the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. He finally, after resisting, imposed those sanctions last month.

As Russian troops mounted on Ukraine's borders late last year, the administration withheld millions of dollars in aid for weeks before finally releasing it. President Biden disregarded bipartisan calls to impose paralyzing sanctions on Russia before the invasion in order to try to deter it. Instead, he waited until after the invasion happened to try to impose costs on Russia. President Biden ignored calls to stop Russian oil imports until it became clear that Congress would pass legislation to do just that. Once the handwriting was on the wall, the President announced an import ban to try to get ahead of congressional action.

President Biden has been so preoccupied with how Putin might react that Putin has been deterring the ad-

ministration from acting with the sort of expediency and dispatch that are absolutely necessary and called for. Waiting until the court of public opinion is not the kind of leadership that this emergency requires. Mr. President, Ukraine is being bludgeoned by Russia every day. We need to act with all deliberate speed to get them the additional resources they need, which means we need to do it now so they can fight and ultimately prevail.

The United States may be an ocean away from this conflict, but democracy itself is on the front lines. We know President Putin is motivated by a vision of restoration of the Russian Empire, after having called the fall of the Soviet Union one of the greatest geopolitical tragedies in history.

So we don't know when Putin will stop or if he will stop, which gives us the only option of doing everything we can to assist our Ukrainian friends from stopping him themselves. We stand in solidarity with our partners in Europe, and we are committed to supporting Ukraine as it defends its sovereignty.

So, in the coming days—hopefully in the coming hours—I hope the Senate will take action on these bipartisan bills and impose greater costs on Russia in the interest of peace and Ukrainian sovereignty.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKLEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF NANA A. COLORETTI

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise in support of Nani Coloretti's nomination to be the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Ms. Coloretti is a dedicated public servant and a proven leader who is well qualified to serve as OMB Deputy Director. She has over 20 years of experience at the Federal, State, and local level executing complex government programs, improving service delivery, and managing large organizations.

Ms. Coloretti served with distinction in the Obama administration as the Assistant Secretary for Management at the U.S. Department of the Treasury and then as the Deputy Secretary at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

It is absolutely critical that we have Senate-confirmed leaders in place at OMB, and I have no doubt that Ms. Coloretti's experience will serve the Agency and the American people well.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Nani Coloretti's nomination to be OMB Deputy Director.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

NOMINATION OF AMY LOYD

Mr. KAIN. Mr. President, I rise to do a couple of things. I am awaiting the arrival of the Senator from Missouri. I am going to make a UC motion to bring up a very important nominee in the Secretary of Defense Department, but before I do, I want to comment on a UC that I made 2 hours ago. I stood here in this spot, and I sought unanimous consent to bring forward the nomination of Amy Loyd, who is the nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Education for Career and Technical Education. She passed out of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee unanimously.

We knew there was a hold on her nomination. We didn't know why. So I sought to bring forward her nomination, and the Senator from Utah, Mr. LEE, appeared, and I asked him why he was objecting to Amy Loyd. The good news was, he answered. He didn't have to, but he gave me an answer, and he said that her work indicated an attachment to critical race theory. That was his response, and he cited an article.

I went up to him after, and I asked him what the article was, and he referred me to an article dated August 2020, titled "Diversifying Apprenticeship: Acknowledging Unconscious Bias to Improve Employee Access." That was the reason he and, he said, on behalf of others were opposing Ms. Loyd's nomination for a really important position focusing on career and technical education in the country.

I went back to my office, and I got the article. The article is seven pages long, August 2020—it is actually six pages long. It is entirely uncontroversial. Listen to this. There is a block that says "What Is Unconscious Bias?" Talk about fair and balanced language:

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their conscious awareness.

Is that controversial? Is that controversial?

There are recommendations for diversifying apprenticeships because, as we know, there are a lot of apprenticeships where there are not many women in apprenticeships. Ms. Loyd is a woman. She wants to diversify apprenticeships. That doesn't seem that unusual.

The recommendations for diversifying apprenticeships in this controversial article where the phrase "critical race theory" is never mentioned are widen the selection pool; seek out workers across skill levels; develop transparent, detailed, and uniform criteria; get multiple perspectives; complement selection processes with program designs that increase access. This is just basic human resources. There is nothing in this document about critical race theory.

When I read it thinking I was going to find some real reason to oppose Ms. Loyd, I found this basic human resources 101—nothing about critical race theory. But then I realized something even more amazing. I looked at

the author of the article. This was being held against Ms. Loyd's confirmation. The author of the article is Jessica Toglia, senior program manager of JFF. Unless this is a *nom de plume*, Amy Loyd had nothing to do with the article that was cited to block her confirmation for this position.

So then I looked further. There are acknowledgements on page 7. Ms. Toglia thanks 10 different people who gave her ideas and thoughts that she put into these six pages. Amy Loyd's name isn't among the 10.

There are then 28 footnotes and references citing articles and other pieces of scholarship that were written. None of them are by Amy Loyd—none.

So in response to my request as the son of a welder that we ought to have somebody at the Department of Education who values career and technical education, this well-qualified individual, who got out of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee by unanimous vote, is now being sort of tarred with the "critical race theory" label based upon an article that she had nothing to do with—nothing to do with.

I knew if I came back and stated this, like, well, who would listen, and who would care? You can assert a reason. But the reason for opposition to her nomination has nothing to do with her.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. President, I am here on another nomination, the nomination of Christopher Lowman to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment.

That position, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment, is the principal assistant and adviser to the Department on logistics and materiel readiness. The Assistant Secretary prescribes the policies and procedures for the conduct of logistics, maintenance, materiel readiness, strategic mobility, sustainment support in the DOD, supply, maintenance, and transportation—extremely important functions to have a military that works.

We are watching the Russian military bog down in Ukraine right now for a lot of reasons, but one of the reasons is that their military has not been sustained and maintained, and a lot of their equipment is bogging down.

Mr. Lowman is the person who would do this important job, and he has been pending before us since November with a vacancy in that position at the Pentagon.

Let me tell you about Mr. Lowman. He spent his entire life serving this country in the military, and I mean entire life. He was born on a military base in Germany because his father was an Army civilian. When he graduated from high school, he went to Monmouth University and then immediately joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1984.

Since 1984—38 years—Mr. Lowman has worked first as a U.S. marine and then as an Army civil servant, totaling more than 30 years. He most recently

served as the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff to the G-3/5/7 Directorate, which provides planning and staff management for Agencies under the authority of the Combined Arms Support Command. He served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition Policy and Logistics. He deployed as a Director of Sustainment for the Combined Security Transition Command in Afghanistan from October 2017 to 2018. Prior to that deployment, he served as the Director for Maintenance Policy for the U.S. Army in the Office of the Chief of Staff. He was the Chief, Supply and Maintenance, at headquarters, U.S. Army Europe.

He is a much awarded member of both the military and the military civil service—the Department of the Army Integrated Logistics Support Achievement of the Year Award; three Army Meritorious Civilian Service Awards; the Army Ordnance Corps Samuel Sharpe Award; the Army's Quartermaster Corps Distinguished Order of Saint Martin.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment is the principal staff assistant and adviser to the Department on logistics and materiel readiness. This is a most important function.

Mr. Lowman is a Virginian who has served his entire life from his birth in military families, serving this Nation as an Active-Duty marine and then as an Army civil servant.

For that reason, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 777, Christopher Joseph Lowman, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I thank the Senator from Virginia for accommodating me here and allowing me to come to the floor, and I thank him for his remarks. I only got to hear the second half of his remarks, but I thank him for his remarks and am sure that he is in earnest about this nomination.

Let me tell you why I am here, and I will be brief. I know we have a vote that is about to kick off. But let me tell you what I am in earnest about.

The crisis in Afghanistan—the attack at Abbey Gate this past August that cost 13 American servicemembers, including 1 from my home State, from the State of Missouri, their lives—is a catastrophe unparalleled in our foreign policy in my lifetime. It is my firm conviction and it is also a promise that I made to the family of the fallen marine from my State that we should do—this Senate should perform its oversight functions related to the cata-

strophic withdrawal from Afghanistan and in particular the events leading up to that attack at Abbey Gate that resulted in the deaths of those servicemembers and the deaths of hundreds, I am afraid—hundreds—of civilians and many hundreds of other Americans left behind.

I have come to this floor before many times now to ask the Senate to hold accountable those who planned and led or failed to lead, in some instances, this operation leading to the attack at Abbey Gate, leading to that catastrophic loss of life, and leading, I am afraid, to the disastrous turn in our foreign policy, the effects of which we continue to feel.

So it is my humble but earnest request that the Senate perform its basic oversight functions, and, very briefly, let me mention one.

U.S. Central Command ordered a report of the events leading up to the Abbey Gate attack that we learned of in February. February 8, I believe, we learned that that report had been completed. It is several thousand pages long. I have the barest summary of it here.

My staff and I have been through all of it, the thousands of pages. They had over 169 interviews that U.S. Central Command conducted, again, to try to understand how we got to this crisis point leading up to and including Abbey Gate.

We have not had a single hearing in the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on this report. Now, I applaud Central Command for carrying out the report, for ordering it, for putting it together, but we should be learning what we can and holding accountable those who need to be held accountable. Who has been fired? No one. Who has been relieved of duty? No one. And if you read the report—and I commend it to my colleagues. If you read the report, you will see individual after individual, commanders on the ground warning that we are not prepared, that the administration was not prepared to get civilians to safety in Kabul; warning that the planning was not adequate; warning that there were dangers.

So, Mr. President, I ask again that the committee do its basic oversight job, perform its basic function, hold a hearing on this report, hold accountable those who failed in that catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan. Until that time, I am going to continue to ask that the Senate observe regular order in leadership positions in the Department of Defense.

And for those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I respect my colleague's right to object, obviously. But I would say that while the Senator from Missouri raises very valid concerns, none of those concern this nominee, Christopher Lowman, and none of his concerns are addressed or